

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING**

February 26, 2015 - 6:36 p.m.  
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Jonathan Hodges, President

Present:

Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent  
Ms. Eileen Shafer, Deputy Superintendent  
Sidney Sayovitz, Esq., General Counsel

\*Comm. Chrystal Cleaves  
Comm. Christopher Irving  
Comm. Errol Kerr  
President  
\*Comm. Manuel Martinez

Comm. Lilisa Mimms  
Comm. Flavio Rivera  
Comm. Kenneth Simmons, Vice

Absent:

Comm. Corey Teague

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Hodges.

Comm. Mimms read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused notice of this meeting:

**Special Meeting  
February 26, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.  
Administrative Offices  
90 Delaware Avenue  
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

**STATUS OF THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET**

Dr. Evans: Tonight's meeting is in response to the President's desire to have a status report relevant to where we are in preparing for the budget for the fiscal year 2015-2016. What I want to do after my introductory remarks is to ask our Acting BA Daisy Ayala and Henry Lee, who is assisting her, to come forward and provide a very brief

overview of where they are in terms of process. I think at least preexisting Board members understand the process, and we're literally following the same process that we follow year after year, starting with engaging staff. Once there's some indication as to which direction we need to go in based on anticipated funds or funds that we don't anticipate and begin to see where we are in terms of spending and collecting information from staff regarding activity for next year that has fiscal implications and then ultimately developing a draft budget. We're very close to having a final first draft. Next Wednesday, as is usually the case, at the workshop meeting for March is when we present that draft to you, the first iteration of the budget. At that point a series of exercises begin with the Board asking a lot of questions. During the month of March and prior to the end of March when you are asked to vote on the budget there typically is a workshop in the middle of the month where the Board really probes deeply into that draft budget, asks all kinds of questions, makes its desires and wishes known, and ultimately the final budget is created. That's the one that you draft either to support or not to support. At this point in time we have not completed the first draft because of circumstances that I think we all know and some bears repeating that influence the budget. We're still working through some of those issues. You know that we have been engaged in a major effort in the past few years to avoid a fiscal cliff. The reality for our district as far back as any of us and those preceding me can recall is that the district has traditionally heavily relied on carry forward funds or fund balances from the previous year to support the next year. That seemed to have been the order of business as it relates to budgeting from year to year and that has continued. Obviously, if we continue to do that, then we are eventually going to face a fiscal cliff. That message was communicated loud and clear a couple of years ago and a tremendous amount of effort was made to avoid or push back the cliff, and we were successful in doing that in large measure. However, a lot of effort has been invested this year to continue that, not knowing what the budget was going to be or the allocation that influences our budget was going to be from the state. Depending on the information that evolves from the Governor's annual speech that really is an introduction to what we get within days or sometimes hours of that speech that reflects our budget. We have received it and you're going to hear that information – some of you may have that information already – as a part of what Daisy and Henry are going to share with you. Another influence on the budget is the ongoing initiatives that we develop annually and then some continue from year to year. Many of those initiatives cost. Some don't, but many of them do and that influences our budget from year to year. A major exercise we engage in with staff, particularly with cabinet members, is reviewing each of those to determine the extent to which we can support them fiscally from year to year. That exercise has been occurring in recent weeks and months as well. We've just about exhausted much of what staff can contribute, though we haven't finished yet. But there are some other things that we are looking at that ultimately we think will influence the budget in terms of potential reductions and items that we need to look at adding to the budget. A good example of something we need to add to the budget involves PARCC and we've talked about that. In fact, you may recall in one of the PARCC preparation workshops that we did with the Board the question was asked whether or not we were going to provide support to the schools in the form of technology coordinators and specialists to support the maintenance of the computers and the connectivity in the schools so that we can administer PARCC with minimal difficulties. That is something we are working to make sure we have in place. That's an example of an addition, but doing that means we have to cut something. I wish that was all we had to cut for, but it isn't. When we look at the amount of fund balance that was used this year to balance the budget the amount is smaller than it has been in the past. You're going to hear the specifics on that also from Henry and Daisy. I don't want to get into the specifics from my voice because they know more and they crunch it from moment to moment, so it changes from moment to moment as they look at the figures. Nonetheless, you're going to get a complete

overview to the extent that it is complete. There are some things we haven't done yet in preparation for next week's meeting when we will complete this process. Then I wish to share with you after their presentation a memorandum that you actually received by email that includes about \$62 million worth of potential cuts, if indeed we need to cut that deep. Thinking about and reflecting on some of the conversations we've had recently we may very well need to. I'll stop at this point and invite Daisy and Henry to the mike to give you that overview.

Ms. Daisy Ayala: Good evening, Commissioners. Just to piggyback on what Dr. Evans said, let me just walk you through the process. We have a calendar which we dispersed out in early October or late November. We have deadlines and we meet those deadlines. We start with the schools. We give them a dollar amount allocated per student. They prepare their budget and if there are any questions my office is there to provide technical support. Once that budget is done it goes to the assistant superintendents for their review. Once that's reviewed, it comes to the office and we close the system. They can no longer go in and modify their budget. The next phase is central office. They go through the same process. They enter their budget in the system. There's justification for the budget. They put in justification for each line on what they're requesting. Once that's done, the system is closed and then we come back together, meet at the cabinet, and inform Dr. Evans of the dollar amount that's being requested. We look at that and we discuss priorities to make sure that the budget is in line with the goals and priorities of the district. With that being said, we do have a gap and we're in the process of trying to close that gap. When we do that we get together and we talk to the individuals of the departments and find ways to reduce the expense. We have PARCC and we're going to need computers to continue providing the equipment that's needed for the PARCC. One of the things that is being considered is a lease/purchase. This way we don't have to pay a couple of million dollars in one year. We can spread it out in four or five years. Those are the examples of the conversations that we have. As you know, it's a flat budget. Unfortunately, expenses are not flat. We have salary increases, health benefit increases, and increases of services and products. Those are some of the challenges that we have. Everything else goes up and our revenue stays flat. If you run a household you know that if your salary stays the same and everything else goes up you're going to have to go into your savings and that's basically what we've been doing. That's pretty much the process, closing the gap and meeting with people, to be creative, and to continue to live within the services.

Comm. Irving: Ms. Ayala, I think some information for us might be helpful as we approach the budget conversation. I mentioned it to Comm. Rivera a few seconds ago. Comm. Rivera did a very good job at explaining to me different ways budgets can be prepared. I'm wondering is it possible for the Board to receive in a timely fashion the request for what each school and department has put in for this year, but then also the request they've had for the last three years, and more importantly, what each department and school has spent over the course of the last three years.

Ms. Ayala: You want a trend of budget and actual for the past three years.

Comm. Irving: Yes, and what each department and school is requesting for this year. Not knowing exactly where we are if there is indeed a deficit to some regard at least if we know what number we're shooting for if a department has requested \$200,000 for the last three years but they've only spent \$162,000 they may not need for us to allocate \$200,000. To me that is a much smarter way for us to look at the budget. It's not cutting and trimming. It's really right-sizing and ensuring that folks spend their money wisely and hold people accountable for it. That's the first question. Given the numbers

we got yesterday, and I know you all have worked on projections even prior to this, exactly what are we facing now? What's the magic number that we have to make up? Is there a ballpark for that number at this point in time?

Ms. Ayala: It's a moving target. This morning we met with certain people, we looked at their budgets, and we found some money that could be saved through the lease and purchasing. For example, PARCC is a big thing that we have to go and move forward. We did buy some equipment, but the old equipment has to be replaced. Instead of replacing it all at once, I met with Dr. Newell and I suggested that we do the lease. This way instead of spending the \$1.5 or \$1.7 million it reduces it and we can spread it over four or five years.

Comm. Irving: I understand the process you're talking about. Is there a concrete number that we have identified as a district that we know we have to meet? What are we in the hole at this point in time? I'm saying in the hole because I don't know finance language.

Ms. Ayala: Deficit.

Comm. Irving: Do we have a ballpark figure for what that deficit looks like?

Ms. Ayala: We're looking at about \$60 million. Just to let you know, we presented what was spent as of year-end June 30, 2014. We did present that for people to budget. However, the needs have changed and we have PARCC this year and again next year.

Comm. Irving: Is that \$60 million incorporating fund balance or not?

Ms. Ayala: Not incorporating fund balance.

Comm. Irving: And the fund balance projected for next year is how much?

Ms. Ayala: About \$30 million. What's there and what we want to generate this year. We're looking to generate somewhere between \$20 and \$25 million.

Comm. Irving: I know you would say you shouldn't do this. But if indeed the fund balance can be created or preserved, we're really looking at somewhere between \$30 and \$40 million.

Dr. Evans: It's more than that. One of the exercises that we are engaged in is what you've just asked for the Board. We've received the initial requests from principals and each one of the divisions which incorporates the departments as well. One of our ongoing challenges is that you can say there's no money, but we have people who will automatically add 3%, 5%, or 10% in some cases and that becomes their budget without going through and taking a zero based budget approach. That is really what needs to happen in times like these, but it doesn't happen. Then the exercise becomes meeting with those people – and we've had the meetings – and working with them to reduce. But then when we still don't get to where we need to then that's when I step in and begin to reduce for them and doing that in as equitable a way as possible. But it is necessary and that's really where we are right now.

Comm. Irving: I just want to make sure the Board gets that information because as the proposed budget comes to us at least we can benchmark over the last three years where each respective department comes from and what they're asking for. Within fairness, there might be new initiatives schools may ask for that we may say this is

important to fund at this point in time given our district priorities as opposed to some others which may have to be delayed given our fiscal realities. But I just want to make sure we get that information in a timely fashion and in a format that we can understand, please.

Comm. Hodges: Unfortunately, I've been unable to schedule a training course like I really wanted to have in advance of the budget. It will be on the 14<sup>th</sup>. We're going to have some of your staff help us with that because the School Boards Association can't do it then, so it will have to be our staff talking about the budget this one time. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get it done in a timely manner so we're going to go forward now. I also want to say you don't do budget priorities in January, February, and March. Those things occur in September and October so that you can have the maximum amount of input and make sure that the curricular imperatives among others are championed in the best time. What we're going to be doing tonight, because of the condition that we're in, I really want some indication of what those numbers look like. That's what I mentioned last night so that people know where we are and some of the concerns that this funding level portends for us. It will inform our discussion in executive session, so if we could have just a thumbnail sketch. There are two more questions on the floor and then just a thumbnail sketch of some of the categories in terms of the funding. I'm going to ask some questions along those lines so people can see that there are some increases in what we're being asked to absorb.

Ms. Ayala: When you say categories, are you looking for program categories or object categories?

Comm. Hodges: Revenue.

Comm. Rivera: Good evening everyone. Chris, nicely put. You emphasized those points which are very important. We need to look at those figures because right now this is going to be my first question and then I have a few comments. Are the figures that you have right now based on requests?

Ms. Ayala: Yes, they are.

Comm. Rivera: That's one thing. Right now we don't have anything. I'm just letting you know right now. We have a tendency based on just what you said to open the meeting. When we look at a budget we need to look at the appropriation side first to see what our actual needs are. Waiting to see how much you're getting from the state to put your budget together is not a good idea. I'm not saying we did that, but we have to emphasize the need first. Then if you have additional funding, if you have more from the state than you actually need, then you go ahead and put all the plans together. Remember, a budget is a plan of the services you're going to provide the students during the year. My concern is during a finance committee meeting we were presented with some figures. You were there, Dr. Hodges and Errol. This presentation showed that every year we didn't spend \$50 million. What we need to do is what Chris basically said. Look at what we spent last year and then if a department asks you for more they have to justify it. Either they had some vacancies last year that were never filled in a timely manner and that justifies you asking for more this year because you're planning to fill it. But I don't think just based on requests it would be responsible to say – and that's just my personal opinion – that we're in the hole \$62 million. It's just not responsible. I'm going to give you the best example. I've been looking at budgets for about 10 years. The best example I can give you is the City of Paterson. For many years every year we put fear into the residents saying the budget is short and we need to cut \$10 million. It is amazing how they were able to cut \$5 million every year without

laying off one person. What that tells you is that budget was overstated. It would be responsible on my part to say that I have the same feeling about the budget here. Based on that presentation, every year us not spending \$50 million I can say that if we don't look at these numbers carefully based on what was spent in the previous two years and this year's request, I can say that those numbers are overstated. At least the requests that they are asking for right now are very overstated. Again, we have to look at the numbers first. If we didn't need the \$50 million you can always have some surplus set aside. In the county we use surplus. We put our budget together first and then we analyze all our revenues. Then we say our revenues don't cover our expenses by \$10 million. If we try to get that from taxation the levy is going to go up too high. Let's use some of our surplus to minimize raising the levy for this year. Just because you have \$400 million coming from the state and you have \$50 million of surplus you don't have to build a budget for \$450 million. That's what I'm trying to tell you. You can build a budget for \$420 million and leave \$30 million there for contractual agreements and expenses that go up. Expenses go up, but I bet we didn't need everything we put in past year's budget. You yourself made a comment one time when we questioned where we found \$1 million or something you were trying to do and you said, "I have a cushion." You said that in a meeting here publicly. We shouldn't have a cushion. We should have a responsible budget with a little leeway, but responsible. I just want to conclude by saying that for now.

Dr. Evans: You've just outlined the budget process that we follow. It starts in late fall when we ask people to begin to think about what they want to implement in terms of programs, whether it's continuing existing programs, new programs, or reduced programs. That actually begins in the fall and there is a timeline. In fact, there is a budget manual that every principal and every one that develops a budget has and it's very clear about when items are to be turned in. We actually had all of the requests from the schools just before the winter holidays.

\*Comm. Cleaves enters the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Ayala: Right before the holidays to give time to the assistant superintendents.

Dr. Evans: All the information was in and was inputted, and then began the exercise of looking at that and making some initial hard choices after understanding the realities. You can scan it very quickly and see who simply added a percent versus who gave very careful and thoughtful consideration to putting that budget together and accurately reflected programs that they felt should be offered. It does begin in the fall just as you outlined. We don't get the information regarding appropriations from the state until just before that first meeting. When the Governor does the speech he did earlier, and it's reflected in one of the handouts you have here, we don't really know what we're going to get. So we have to anticipate. We have to establish a target and go for that target and we hope that with contingencies in mind that we come close. I think we did pretty well in anticipating what we might get this time, even though early on we were told that it could be a lot worse. But the process that you just outlined in the process we follow.

Comm. Rivera: Can I just ask two questions? Did we give an initiate to the departments on what to do when submitting their budgets? Did we tell them we don't want to see just a 2% increase? Did we give them that?

Dr. Evans: Yes, and we still got increases.

Comm. Rivera: Okay. That was my next question. I forgot what I was going to ask you. I'll bring it up later.

Comm. Kerr: The presentation was made at the fiscal committee meeting regarding surpluses. When you construct a budget, I believe you start at the point of need and move on from there. If you were to just look at what we have in Paterson and look at our budget and our performance, could you honestly say that we have adequately through our budget process addressed all the issues or needs that we need to address in the district? If we cannot say that, then we cannot start at the point of surplus because there is no surplus. We create the surplus. If we are not addressing the real needs of the district and we have money there, it means that we are shortchanging our own process. I think before we talk about surplus and extras we need to look and bring to the table the real needs that this district is facing in terms of how best we educate our kids. I don't think the budget as we have it is adequately addressing those issues. That's the reason we have so many dislocations within our district. We move people around like musical chairs. We bring new programs. We're trying to do things to address some of the issues, but we're not really addressing them because there's no real adequacy in terms of our budget structure. Dr. Evans, tell the teachers at the school-based level, "You cut your budget whether you are in need of a new this or a new that. You're going to cut your budget by 2% or 3% because he was instructed from the state that this is what you have to do." In that calculation there is nothing there that was considered in terms of the needs of the children. All that was considered is the hard cold numbers of what you can get in terms of working with what you have. I think as a district we need to have our handle on what's needed and present it. Then let us work from that standpoint backwards. But we can't have the budget ahead of the needs of the district. When we are done with that process then we say we have a surplus. We can create it and that's what we've been doing year after year after year.

Comm. Mimms: Everything that was stated was right on and Comm. Kerr actually took my point. Thank you for reading my mind. I was wondering being new to the Board. We know we're looking to bring it back into local control and we're looking to meet these targets and these metrics. We know the areas that we suffer through and the areas where we're doing better at. Do we ever look at that as an item? Those are definite needs, especially in curriculum. Instead of keeping a program for a time period that has not worked consistently and we see that is not working, we keep utilizing the program instead of cutting it and maybe putting that money for teachers so we'll have more instructional time that will help to assist or to build in that particular area. Do we ever look at the variances of programs that we use? Is there a trajectory in place with the new programs that are implemented or instituted to determine whether they're working? Has it been dinosaured out? Is it working anymore? How long we do keep a program before we decide that it's not working?

Dr. Evans: We don't dinosaur anymore. We are into serious program evaluations to look at outcomes. We give ample time to implement it fully and then we evaluate whether or not we get the outcomes that we're supposed to get. One of the reasons we've restructured programs is we did an evaluation and determined that what we were doing wasn't working. So we changed it, modified it, created a new program, or started doing something different. That is a part of our infrastructure now, to regularly evaluate programs looking at outcomes. They can be process outcomes. They can be numerical academic outcomes. But we do, and the number of evaluations we have is increasing significantly. So we do. You're right, that was a practice that we noticed, but that has changed. A good example is evaluations. We've cut at least a half dozen or more assessments out of our protocol because we found that the information they were giving us wasn't of use so we stopped doing it. We then added some others, but we haven't really put back as many as we cut. With PARCC and a number of other things coming on board we felt that would really replace the useless information that many of those assessments were giving us. But that's probably the best example. There are at

least a half dozen assessment programs over the past three years that we've cut out altogether. We are into program evaluation now.

Comm. Cleaves: You said we cut out programs after we evaluate them to see if they work. What about those persons who provide those programs that are not working? Are we reevaluating those particular persons? Maybe it's not necessarily the program but by whom it was implemented.

Dr. Evans: You're talking about staff. You're right. Yes, we do. There are some considerations, unfortunately, that go beyond for some of those people, but not all. We most certainly have. Actually, with the new teacher and principal evaluation systems that's more systematic now than ever.

Comm. Hodges: Mr. Kerr and Comm. Mimms hit it on the head and that's one of the issues that this conversation tonight continues with. To say that our budget is adequate is not commensurate with the needed outcomes, so something has to change. We can go ahead and cut \$100 million off the budget tomorrow. We can do that. Just cut everything. But our real purpose here is to educate children at high levels. And just a cursory reading of our test scores is saying that we're not doing that, not to the degree that we need to. So something is missing. It may not be money. It may be process, procedures, or whatever, but it could also be money.

Comm. Irving: I was surprised when you said it may not be money, but you came back to it.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely. Some of the issues that we have to wrestle with and do a better job looking at is what are we delivering educationally. One of the reasons I support the PARCC testing is that standard is different than the one that we are striving for currently. Dr. Evans feels that we have some pieces in place that might address that. I'm not quite sure I agree. I don't agree that there are enough of those pieces. Otherwise we'd be doing much better on our regular standardized tests. You wouldn't have parents coming in here saying their child got all As and Bs, but then they failed the STAR assessment. Then you wouldn't have parents coming in saying there's no art in their school and there's no music in their school. There are no other programs which, by the way, help to draw students into school and makes school a more reasonable and attractive place to be. Those things aren't there. I think the PARCC testing moving forward is going to bring you some substantial challenges in terms of what you have to do to address that. Everybody all over the state is complaining about how hard it is. It's not just us. And they already are doing better than we are. So if they're doing better than we are and they're complaining, and that's the standard, you have to imagine what it's going to take us to get there. It's going to be hard to do that without money. That's one of the things we need to focus on as we go further into this conversation. I wanted to ask for some data so you have a better sense of what some of the issues are.

Comm. Rivera: I agree with what you said. The information that Chris requested is actually going to serve that same purpose. We're going to notice some areas where some of the funding could probably be shifted to other areas. For example, you have a line here in this document that you gave us that says we're reducing \$1.2 million from that category that's there. I bet those are probably vacancies or money you've put in that budget...

Dr. Evans: No, it's not.

Comm. Rivera: Are there actual positions in there right now?



Dr. Evans: They're actual positions that we're going to cut.

Comm. Rivera: Okay. Are they filled?

Dr. Evans: Yes.

Comm. Rivera: Okay. I just want to make sure.

Comm. Hodges: Let me give you an example of some of our issues. I'm sorry we didn't get to this when we were talking about the assessments earlier in the year. One of the biggest problems that we have is with critical thinking and analysis. Am I correct?

Dr. Evans: You're correct.

Comm. Hodges: That's one of our biggest issues. We don't teach that well. So the PARCC exam focuses on critical thinking and analysis. That's its focus.

Comm. Irving: More so than just the content area.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely. It's not, "Do I know this?" How do you use what you know? So you're going to have to find a way to teach that. We currently don't do that. Clearly, we're going to have to reach standard and that's going to cost some money. It may cost textbooks. It may cost training teachers on how to teach in different ways. It may cost computer programs. It may cost chess programs. Whatever it is, it's going to cost something else because we have to do these things differently than we have been up to today and implementing new changes costs money. Are there other places that can be cut? Quite possibly! We may have to find that out, but I'm telling you we're not where we're supposed to be and whatever it's going to take to shift to that new position, I don't think we'll arrive at that simply by cutting something else that we don't do very well.

Comm. Irving: Just in reference to what Dr. Evans mentioned a few seconds ago with regards to looking at positions that may be vacant, I think there needs to be strong consideration given where we are with regards to long-standing vacancies that we currently have and how to fill them. I'm speaking in reference to what the parent who came here spoke about before with regards to special education. Clearly there are cases where over the last two or three years we've found it hard to find speech pathologists and school psychologists. I think at this point in the juncture it behooves us to at least investigate what the cost will be if we were going to contract those positions out. I say contract because given where we are I question the validity of some of what our child study teams are doing and the efficacy of what they're doing. When you have a professional service to that degree – because I would never say that about teaching and the instructional piece – a professional service like going to see a speech therapist or a psychologist is worth considering. Even to that degree, I know we briefly had a conversation about the instructional aides and I know these are people's jobs we're talking about here. I want to make it very clear I'm not talking about removing people's jobs in lieu of contracting. But if there are vacancies present there is a process you can engage in to keep people in these positions. As people either retire, leave, or get removed there's a way to take those positions and move them into a contracting role. That's a responsible way to do it. When we had this conversation a while back we didn't have that conversation. I think if we're going to move into the contracting route, which is the responsible thing to at least investigate, we also have to consider how that impacts the folks on the ground and what's the exit or transition plan to make it happen. I never want us to be a position where we're taking folks' jobs away, but I also don't

want to be in a position where we're saving adults' jobs at the behest of kids. People who got B.A.s and M.A.s could pick up and find some other place to work in lieu of programs and services that could go to young people. I certainly hear you, Comm. Mimms, but before we talk about programs that are geared to helping kids that we're doing everything we can to shore up those pieces. But then we have to go back and look at the programs and ask are these programs indeed working. If not, are there other priorities that we have? Case in point is the Choice program that you have. I'm sure some things are going to have to go or be moved for you to get the Choice program. It is what it is. What does that look like? The IFL is a great example. I know that you're a big fan of the IFL, but I know to date we haven't spent all the money contracted for IFL, maybe a little more than half. If that's the case, and I know we're supposed to be phasing out next year, how much more do we really need it? Do we need to budget another \$1.2 million? Or can we take the surplus or the current money we have now that we haven't used, earmark that, coupled with another \$200,000? We just have to be a little more crafty for how we're really building these budgets given past experiences and I think there are some good examples. Just cutting positions is the easy thing to do. I'm hoping that you all will go with a scalpel and go through this budget. Lease purchase is a great finite example of how to still get what we need and find another way to do it, being able to contract what services other districts our size are contracting that won't affect and hurt instruction. There has to be difference recommendations brought.

Ms. Ayala: Be creative.

Comm. Hodges: Absolutely. Can you give us a sense of what those numbers mean and where they're coming from?

Ms. Ayala: What numbers, the appropriations?

Comm. Hodges: Yes.

Ms. Ayala: They're coming from curriculum. A big piece of it is trying to get some facilities. Facilities are a huge piece of it. They plan on doing a lot of work. As you know, there's a lot of work that needs to be done in the district.

Comm. Hodges: The revenue coming in from the state, what are those categories so the Board has a set of numbers?

Ms. Ayala: I didn't bring a copy. We have equalization, transportation, special education, security, PARCC readiness, per-pupil growth, and debt services.

Comm. Hodges: How much for each category?

Ms. Ayala: Category I is \$369 million. Transportation is \$3.1 million. Special education is \$15 million. Security is \$11 million. PARCC is \$273,000. Debt service is \$795,000.

Comm. Hodges: We'll make sure that you get a copy of all this information. You're going to get it next week anyway. Can you repeat those slowly so they get a thumbnail sketch?

Ms. Ayala: From the state we get equalization for \$369 million.

Comm. Hodges: Equalization means what?

Ms. Ayala: You have more experience with this, Henry.

Mr. Henry Lee: Equalization was part of the School Funding Reform Act. This is based on enrollment where high school is worth \$1.3 million, elementary is worth \$1 million, and middle school is \$1.2 million. Based on our enrollment this is equalization so that we can provide aid and be equal to other districts in the state.

Comm. Hodges: In terms of poverty levels.

Mr. Lee: Poverty levels in the State of New Jersey. Equalization is so that...

Comm. Hodges: It's compensation for the high level of concentration of poverty in the city.

Mr. Lee: Right.

Comm. Hodges: What's the next one?

Ms. Ayala: Transportation is \$3.1 million. Special education is \$15 million. Security is \$11 million. PARCC readiness is \$273,000. Debt service is \$795,000.

Comm. Hodges: How much do we spend for charter schools?

Ms. Ayala: For next year, \$36 million.

Comm. Hodges: That was \$32 million and now it's \$36 million. Okay. The ADA, my understanding was that they had made a decision they weren't going to use that anymore. Has that changed to zero?

Ms. Ayala: That has not changed because it was in the calculation when it first came. However, from that point forward it has been flat-funded.

Comm. Hodges: So what's that number now?

Ms. Ayala: I really didn't look at the details. In the beginning it was about \$16 million. I'm not 100% sure, but I think \$19 million was last year. I have to go look at the details.

Comm. Hodges: So from \$16 million it's gone to \$19 million. What you need to understand is this is off the top. It was \$32 million and it's now \$36 million. That \$19 million is not supposed to be there at all. It's supposed to be zero.

Comm. Kerr: In a meeting we did have that discussion and we did ask the Superintendent to push back on it. Just tell them that we need for them to reassess that piece of cost that will be applied to us. I don't know if the administration did that. If we did not do it, then we can't blame the state for applying the levy on us.

Comm. Hodges: There's more conversation to come around those areas in terms of strategies. We'll talk about that later. Are there any other categories there?

Ms. Ayala: Just debt services at \$795,000.

Comm. Kerr: All of that is wrapped up in the equalization.

Ms. Ayala: That's correct.

Comm. Hodges: The Governor also rolled out a brand new program, as I understand it. What's it called? Open enrollment in other districts, Choice, has been rolled out this year. September of 2015 we could conceivably have some impact from that.

Comm. Kerr: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: I just want to put that on the table so you all get a sense of where we're going.

Comm. Kerr: Our kids are going to other districts and the money follows the child?

Comm. Hodges: That's right. And if there are districts that are strapped for money they'll take them. I just want you to understand. When they do leave, 60% of the money that we send those hard costs stay here. So when they leave 60% of what we give them we're still forced to absorb in the district. That's what I understand. Just be aware of all that. This is flat-funding. We're pretty close to where we were last year.

Ms. Ayala: Exactly. I think we lost \$1,500 in debt services.

Comm. Hodges: CPI has remained flat, or did it go up?

Comm. Kerr: Maybe 2% or 3%.

Ms. Ayala: 1.5%.

Comm. Hodges: So it went up 1.5%. Benefits and health care, what did that do?

Ms. Ayala: About 17% to 20%.

Comm. Hodges: It increased.

Ms. Ayala: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: Salaries, what did they do? Did they stay flat?

Ms. Ayala: They did not stay flat. It's about 4% or 5%. Keep in mind that we had the PEA negotiations.

Comm. Hodges: Sure, so that increased.

Comm. Rivera: What step of Charter 78 are we on right now?

Ms. Ayala: We're in Tier 4.

Comm. Rivera: And we still went up 17%?

Comm. Hodges: Flat-funding is not flat. I just want to bring that home to you. You've already increased from \$32 to \$36 million. You've got \$19 million when you're supposed to have zero. You have increases in CPI, meds, and salaries. It's not flat. Essentially, you have something in the order of a 3% to 5% cut in your overall budget going out the door.

Comm. Rivera: We all understand that expenses go up, but for us to sit here and have a discussion about our situation without having anything in front of us. I know this was

asked to be put together very quickly. I agree every organization their health costs go up and everybody is facing the same issue. We don't even have the same revenues as last year because if you guys recall we started the year with a \$2 million cut from previous year, that property that we were trying to sell, and now you're pointing out that we have another four that's going to the charter school. To start the year, even before we look at the numbers, by your expenses here we're in the hole \$6 million compared to last year. I'm just a little careful before we look at numbers to put this out there. We have the morale of the teachers. We have to be careful what we say until we have the actual numbers.

Comm. Hodges: No, I don't have to be careful at all. I have to be honest.

Comm. Rivera: I know what you're saying. We're being honest, but as you said before, Dr. Hodges, this is based on requests from the departments. We still haven't analyzed it. Again, when they put this request, they put the request based on what they had last year in the budget, not based on what they spent. For example, the administration would not do that because they put the budget together and they're responsible. But let's say their budget was \$2 million and the Superintendent, for whatever reason, says let's keep it flat. Now they want to submit \$2 million again when every year they probably submitted \$1.3 million. Or they have some vacancies that they're looking to fill and they still want to keep that money there. You being the head of a department you never want to reduce your budget if you're not told to reduce it because you're never going to get it back. It's going to be hard for you to increase your budget once you reduce it. That's what I'm saying, Dr. Hodges. I agree 100% expenses go up and salaries go up because of negotiations and labor agreements. But we have to have a nice look and look at last year's expenses and the year before. Then we come to the table and say if last year and the year before you only spent \$1.5 million, why are you still asking for the same amount as last year, which is \$2 million? Then if you say we're going to put these programs together, then we go and decide if you're going to have that in there or not. Again, this is based on requests from departments, which is probably based on prior year's budget, not on prior year's expenses. I just want to put that out there.

Comm. Hodges: The numbers I'm discussing are just referenced to the revenue that we're receiving as a district versus what we received last year and the relevant costs. I haven't even gotten to where the district is in terms of its appropriations. All I'm discussing is this is our number coming in and it does not meet the percentage. Already you're 3% to 5% in the hole. That was the entire point of that. I'm not even getting into how you make adjustments and cuts.

Comm. Rivera: Let's say next year if we do what we're planning to do this time around next year what you're doing is perfectly fine. For every dollar you spend you have to have a dollar of revenue. That means that if last year's budget was \$500 million and we already see a cut based on what you pointed out about charter school and the \$2 million I just reminded you of, right there we're already short aside from the increases and expenditures. What I'm saying is, and we all agree, we have to take a close look and not just talk about cuts. Let's see what we can reallocate to other areas where we have needs. I just want to point that out. It's not just about revenue. It's also about the appropriation side. For example, last year if we did this whole exercise maybe we didn't need to budget \$50 million in surplus. That's my point. Daisy, in the past three years what was your surplus, if you can remember?

Ms. Ayala: We haven't really used that money.

Comm. Rivera: How much of it did you use in the budget three years ago?

Ms. Ayala: We used \$25 million the year before that and \$23 million the year before that.

Comm. Rivera: And then we jumped to \$50 million?

Ms. Ayala: Yes.

Comm. Rivera: That's my point. Things go up all the time, but you just don't create a deficit from one year to the other of over \$20 million out of the blue. I wasn't around, but I'm just telling you that this needs to be analyzed because you just don't go from using a surplus. Dr. Hodges, you just pointed it out. We're receiving \$369 million from the state. When you add all that up it's probably around \$400 million. Your appropriations have to equal your expenses, which is your plan of what services you want to provide. If it doesn't equal the \$400 million that the state is giving us, let's say it's \$420 million, and then we get another \$13 million. How much do we get from the city, Dr. Evans?

Ms. Ayala: \$38 million.

Comm. Rivera: So we have \$438 million. Let's say when we put this appropriate side of the budget together it adds up to \$450 million and we only have \$438 million to use, that's when you go ahead and use some of your surplus. But because you have \$50 million in surplus doesn't mean you have to use it all. That's what I'm saying. It's responsible to see what you're getting from the state. But putting it together based on what the state is giving you... If the state is giving you \$500 million this year you want to build your budget based on that \$500 million. Your revenues have to equal your appropriations. What I'm saying is you don't use all of your surplus. You leave some surplus aside. You just don't use all of it because you have it.

Comm. Hodges: How much of the surplus are we using for this budget going forward?

Ms. Ayala: We have about \$11 million. We spent the whole \$52 million. That's all that's there.

Comm. Rivera: Let's just start over. We budgeted the \$52 million that we had. By state law you cannot overspend your budget. Every year you're going to have money left because you didn't fill positions, you didn't spend the money on what you had planned to spend it on, maybe you started three months after the year began instead of at the beginning. So the bottom line is you're always going to have some surplus. If we're tight the way we are, it's for you to take charge, Dr. Evans, and say we're only going to purchase what's essential right now. You want to provide the services, but given that we're in the situation we're in, when we get these numbers from Daisy we're going to determine what actions we need to take. Then we're going to determine what we need for next year's surplus. But you don't plan to create surplus. That's very irresponsible to at the beginning of the year say we're going to create some surplus for next year. Surplus just happens because you didn't spend the money and things of that nature. But you don't plan to have surplus. That's just something that happens. If the state finds out we're planning to have surplus they wouldn't be too happy.

Comm. Hodges: What I want to bring home in stark relief is how much surplus we no longer have. That's where we are today. What I also asked them last night was to project one to two years in the future so you get a thumbnail sketch of what that future is

going to look like so that you can then not wait until the future to begin planning today. Do we have some of those projections?

Ms. Ayala: We have engaged Lerch, Vinci & Higgins to prepare a projection.

Comm. Hodges: What's the timeframe we're going to get that back?

Ms. Ayala: I have to call them. I know they're working. They were in the office this week getting all reports.

Comm. Hodges: But if we're down to \$11 million in surplus you're beginning to see. We were \$50 million and now we're down to \$11 million. You're getting where we're going here. The ADA, we still have to figure out what that's all about. But the \$36 million does not stay static for charter schools. That's not saying where it is. She's about to open 1,000 students up the hill in Tech and we're going to get 50% of those students coming out of our district. If they open up two or three more charter schools in this district over the next two years you're looking at in total about \$10 million off the top in two years from now. There's more about that later.

Comm. Rivera: I just have a question for Dr. Evans or Daisy, whoever can answer it. Given that I wasn't around last year or for the budget process that we're in right now, what caused us to go from utilizing \$25 million in surplus to going up to \$50 million? I'm sure there's a reason. I don't know about it because I wasn't around. I just want to know why we went from \$25 million to \$50 million. Was the funding from the state from last year to this year the same? What caused us to go from anticipating in the budget from \$25 to \$50 million?

Comm. Kerr: In your budget you don't plan for charters, do you? Charters are a cost that comes up during the course of the year and you have to pay for it. The levy that the state is applying to the district is \$19 million for attendance. Is that something that you budget for?

Dr. Evans: We anticipate that it's funds that we're not going to get based on our historical attendance data. When we do projections we do take that into consideration. We don't budget for what we don't think we're going to get.

Comm. Kerr: You don't budget for it, but you use surplus to fill the hole if you have to pay for that.

Dr. Evans: In some cases, yes.

Comm. Kerr: The point I'm trying to make to Comm. Rivera is simply that there are things that you do not budget for in this district, but the cost comes up on you and you have to address those situations. I mentioned two and I'm sure there might be hundreds more. Dr. Evans might come out of the blue and throw a program in the district that costs \$2 million, which was not budgeted for. I'm just saying you have to pay for those things.

Comm. Rivera: I want to raise a question if that's the case. During the year if you don't have the money in the budget, if your budget is \$400 million, can you go ahead and spend \$410 million? He just said things come up during the year. You were correct in his response to him. You take into account a lot of those things. You anticipate it and you put it in the budget. His comment is that things come up during the year that you did not anticipate...

Comm. Kerr: No, we're talking about year to year budget. If you did not budget for it this year and it's something that was thrown at you, you have to find money in the next year. Let me finish because it seems like you didn't understand what I was trying to say. You will have to find money in next year's budget. What that does is you have to look at your surplus that you have created this year. You take that surplus and that increases your cost of operation over that period of time.

Comm. Rivera: I agree with you. I appreciate you trying to answer my question, but I wanted to hear from the administration because they're the ones who manage the budget. My question was specifically to the administration. I'm sure there was a need. I'm not trying to put you guys on the spot. But me not being around last year, I just want to know how come we went in one year utilizing only \$25 million and jumping to the next year \$50 million? I bet if you go back historically four or five years, I don't think you went one year from \$1 to \$25 million or from \$10 to \$25 million. My question was a general question.

Dr. Evans: I understand the question and it does have an answer. Let me start with a variety of scenarios that occurred. After we complete the budget and it's approved, even after the end of a fiscal year going into the next, there are times when certain requirements are imposed on us as a school district that we have no choice but to fund and implement. That does happen. With many of our budgets, and particularly with my budget for my office, we have contingency funds built into our budget because we know something is going to come down the pike that ultimately we're going to have to fund. So we budget in a way that we're ready if it happens. If it doesn't, then it's part of the surplus or what we carry forward to the next year. But every year that I've been here there's been something that has been imposed on us either by the Department of Education in New Jersey or by the US Department of Education. It could be a new special education requirement that's imposed by federal legislation or any number of things and we're required to fund it. Again, our budget practices allow for much of that to be absorbed. I tell principals and staff they need to build contingencies into the budget just in case, but not to the point that we go over our budget.

Comm. Hodges: I can give you an example of that. Two years ago Commissioner Cerf wanted Innovation Zone. He sanctioned us for buying those electronic labs that were not in the budget. We were sanctioned for buying those labs. We had to install them because we didn't have the proper labs in place. We went out and bought needed equipment and we were sanctioned because they weren't in the budget. This is the Commissioner. He wrote us a letter for QSAC and said, "This is wrong. You can't do that. You're being sanctioned." Then he turned around and he wanted Innovation Zone. We had to implement Innovation Zones, which were not part of the budget. So their law was disregarded completely because this was a program that was important to him.

Comm. Rivera: Just so you know, there's a line called contingent in our budget. How much was it, \$1 million?

Ms. Ayala: Emergency money. That's \$1 million.

Comm. Rivera: But that's for things that you don't foresee that you didn't put in your budget.

Ms. Ayala: That's correct.

Comm. Rivera: You could have told me health costs went up.



Comm. Irving: In the timeframe that you're speaking of this district absorbed three different charter schools over the course of one year and then in the second year two more.

Comm. Hodges: And they're growing.

Comm. Irving: In the third year now there are three charter schools with the potential of four coming on. That, with the growing costs of out-of-district placement, do you know how much we're giving charter schools?

Comm. Rivera: I know how much you're giving charter schools, but in one year \$25 million? We opened about three charter schools in one year? Is that what you're saying with us giving them approximately \$5 or \$6 million? Is that what you're saying? I don't think that happened.

Comm. Irving: Between the charter school costs and the rising costs of what they just spoke of and the costs associated with us operating. Of course, everything rises while our budget stays flat. There was definitely a need for us to dip into the fund balance.

Comm. Hodges: These are important discussions and they are very germane to what we're going to be facing. I'm sorry we don't have the two-year rollout because it will make very clear where I'm going with all this and why we're having this meeting tonight. We're in a serious state here. I'm going to tell you right now, Dr. Evans is certainly going to champion his curriculum department. I'm sure he has fine people there. However, when those PARCC scores come back – actually, we can't wait until those scores come back – we have to start now to plan to do something differently. We have no choice. If we start cutting left and right, where's the money coming from? Where does the staff come from? How do you do the work? Who's going to do the work? You have teachers engaged in curriculum writing just during the summer? They need it during the school year. Who pays for that? So we have some real issues. The budget is getting narrower and narrower and we really have to understand where this is going. That's part of our discussion in executive session. Is there any more information that you have?

Ms. Ayala: No.

Comm. Hodges: That information in terms of the two-year projection we'll hopefully have by next week.

Ms. Ayala: At the next meeting or right before the workshop meeting.

Comm. Hodges: Right, so people can get the information going into the workshop.

Ms. Ayala: Sure.

Comm. Hodges: That's very important.

## **DISCUSSION OF BOARD GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR BUDGET**

Comm. Hodges: As I stated before, this isn't the time for Board goals and priorities, but I do want to give the Board an opportunity to put some of your concerns around the budget on the table. I guess they still have until the ninth.

Dr. Evans: The initial presentation?

Comm. Hodges: No, in the hands of the County Superintendent.

Dr. Evans: I think March 9.

Comm. Hodges: So we still have a chance to talk around the edges about some of your priorities.

Comm. Kerr: Last budget cycle I believe the question was asked of this body what they would like to see addressed by the budget. We listed quite a few things that we would have liked for the budget to address. I honestly do not know at this time what areas were addressed in that budget. However, I think the areas that were identified are still as relevant today as they were yesterday. So my recommendation is I would like to recap those things that were highlighted last time and the Superintendent tells us what areas were addressed in last year's budget and what we intend to do with this year's budget.

Comm. Irving: I tend to agree with Comm. Kerr in that regard. But for the folks who weren't here and for the Board members who were I want to bring you guys back to when we had that conversation and we made that list. I felt then and I still feel now that the list was too exhaustive and it was just too robust to ask him to target and focus on. I advocated then and I advocate now that if we're going to hold his feet to the fire out of that list of 15 or 20 initiatives we should have picked four or five. To me, that is just a hell of a lot more manageable to ask Dr. Evans to achieve at that point in time. All I'm saying is that I agree with you. I think when that list comes back I think the Superintendent will do his best to try to mend and figure out what might have been addressed. But don't be surprised if it hasn't. I think moving forward, if it hasn't, we should go to that list and try to target four or five specific things in the next year that we can hone in on.

Comm. Kerr: That's what I'm asking.

Comm. Hodges: Quite frankly, this discussion about budget priorities is the wrong time to do this. But I wanted to give you an opportunity to tell Dr. Evans any last minute major concerns before that budget goes into place. We'll have a little bit more of a conversation next week about that. We're going to hold goal setting for 2015-2016 at the end of May and June, and then more of a discussion for curricular imperatives in September or October before they begin to sit down and craft the budget. We'll have a better idea of what kinds of issues we have to address. You won't have the PARCC yet then. PARCC won't come back until October this first round.

Dr. Evans: Perhaps a little earlier than that.

Comm. Hodges: Hopefully we'll have the PARCC exams, which will really give us a chance to focus in on what some of those priorities should be, certainly around curriculum. That's what I'm going to be hammering.

Comm. Kerr: I don't think Comm. Rivera and Comm. Mimms were here. They should get a copy of it and let them go through it. If there are any areas that they would like to add...

Comm. Hodges: We're going to have the whole Board get a copy.

Comm. Kerr: After they review it, then we can look at it again.

Comm. Hodges: Right. The whole Board can get a copy so we can refresh our memories and then bring them up to date as soon as possible. Is there anything further on Board goals and priorities at this point?

Comm. Mimms: Dr. Evans, you said that you're doing an assessment of what programs worked and didn't work. Is there any way that we can see criteria of how you determine what's working well and what doesn't work and then maybe some percentages? I don't know how you measure. Is there a measure or a success rate system that you use for that?

Dr. Evans: It depends on the program. For example, a year and a half ago we did a comprehensive evaluation of our special education programs and we asked Montclair State University to tell us what best practices are as it relates to evaluating special education programs. They developed a tool, we reviewed it, and then they used that to collect a lot of information to assess. We did a similar kind of thing within our guidance program. A different set of measures were used. It's different from program to program depending on what the best practices are for that particular program. But we're not talking about assessments that we go in and do ourselves. We actually hire the experts to go in those areas to actually do it. I can give you, for example, the two evaluations that we're done that I just mentioned and we have more. You can see the differences. But the measures are based on whatever the best practices are that yield outcomes that we want, or practices that we want for that particular program.

Comm. Simmons: I think what Comm. Mimms is asking for is the compendium that Dr. Hodges has been asking for.

Comm. Kerr: That's right.

Dr. Evans: I did understand that. And to give you an update, we just hired a consultant to come in and prepare it.

Comm. Hodges: Will that be comparing the structure? We need more than just a compendium. I need the structure in place. We can reuse the structure as time goes on.

Dr. Evans: Before this person develops the product we have said they need to talk to you first. We don't want to go through this effort again and it's not what you're asking for. The consultant will be talking to you.

Comm. Hodges: Just a searchable database.

Comm. Mimms: I don't know if this is the time to do it, but I just have a question. I know we did the final testing for all the schools of PARCC.

Dr. Evans: It was a field test to test the technology.

Comm. Mimms: Do we have the results of that test?

Dr. Evans: Generally it's good. However, we discovered today a problem that we couldn't control. The company that supplies our internet services went down for a period of time. That's something we couldn't anticipate. But beyond that, from the first test to the most recent one we saw tremendous improvements. Everything was going

well and until it went down today it was going well. Then we were told that it's not us. It was the internet company.

\*Comm. Martinez enters the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Comm. Hodges: I'll have more to talk about the PARCC test after.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**It was moved by Comm. Simmons, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be opened. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

No speakers.

**It was moved by Comm. Simmons, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be closed. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Comm. Hodges: Let me just say this evening before I came here I was asked to speak about PARCC to a group of parents at Renaissance School 1. I gave them my personal position, not the Board's. We haven't really established what the Board's position was. I gave my personal position on what I thought about the PARCC test and it was very interesting to find out what their chief concerns are. I told them I would bring that back because we need to be aware of what's going on in the minds of a lot of parents. First and foremost, will our children be prepared to take this test in terms of technology? In particular, can our children who are used to writing tests with their hands suddenly be asked to transfer that to writing stories and things with a computer, particularly the younger kids who may not have that kind of ability? Is the performance on this test going to hurt our kids? If they do poorly, what will be the sanction? What happens if they opt out? None of those answers did I have for the students, Dr. Evans. Perhaps you do.

Dr. Evans: Part of what you're asking, for me at least, I don't know the answer. I can say to you, and I've said it before, our students have been taking assessments on computer for four years now. The STAR assessment is an electronic test and all our students, actually k-11, have taken STAR on the computer. The computer is less of an issue but not totally not an issue because there are new tools that they have to command to take the PARCC, the drop down rulers and those kinds of things, that's what's different about it. Instruction that we've given our kids and practice has been on those. Whether or not it's been enough practice is an open question. We don't know how much is enough, but we have provided ample instruction and opportunities for students to practice on computers that are in our schools. We've added significant numbers of computers to every school so that youngsters can have easy access to computers. When I made the comment previously about our kids doing better than we think, one of the reasons I based that on was the fact that they've been testing on computers now for four years. The other was the IFL work. Are they going to blow the top out of the test? I can't say that, but I don't think they're going to do as bad as most people think they are. Another good indication is how well our 3-8 graders have done on NJASK in the past two administrations because Common Core standards were integrated in it. But again, that was not a computerized administration of NJASK. That's the wild card right now. I think our kids are going to do better than people think

they are, but they may not do as well as we want them to. I have a great deal of confidence in our kids and the work that's been taking place in our classrooms. It's not perfect by any means, but I think we're better than many seem to think.

Comm. Hodges: Referencing what happens if the test scores are not favorable, do these test scores hurt the students down the road, particularly the high school students since they're the immediate issue more so than the elementary school?

Dr. Evans: No, because we have options as a school district and the students have options as to the measures that are used for graduation to replace passing HSPA. SAT can be used. If they do well on PARCC the parts that they do well on can be used. There are a number of others. There are at least a half dozen or more alternatives for our high school students to attain a passing score. Dr. Cavanna, do you remember some of the other measures that are included there for high school students to graduate in addition to having passing grades in their classes? In addition to SAT, ACT, a passing score on that subtest for math or language arts.

Dr. Anthony Cavanna: There were a number of tests or assessments that could be used in order for students to meet the graduation requirement. Dr. Evans mentioned some. Off the top of my head I remember the Accuplacer, which is a test that students take to get into colleges, like PCCC. I don't remember the rest, but I can pull out the memo and provide a copy.

Dr. Evans: We can provide that to you. So in that respect, no. Remember, this is a norming year, meaning across the nation those scores are going to be looked at and ultimately nationally norms will be established across the board in English language arts and math.

Comm. Cleaves: This past Monday I was in Trenton and I sat in on a legislation meeting. The legislators have been talking about PARCC very heavily and seriously. They just passed onto the Senate floor A-4190 legislation. It is a concern for everyone, not just us. If you get a chance to read that legislation it has been passed by the legislators in our district along with their colleagues and it has been pushed onto the Senate floor.

## **MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LEGAL MATTERS**

**It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that the Board goes into executive session to discuss legal matters. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:10 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

**It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.